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A Letter to the Right Hon-  
ourable Lord North, Etc., Etc.,  
Etc., on the Present Proceedings  
Concerning the East-India Com-  
pany

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L E T T E R

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD NORTH, &c. &c. &c.

[ Price One Shilling. ]

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L E T T E R

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD NORTH, &c. &c.

ON THE

PRESSENT PROCEEDINGS

LORD NORTH

CONCERNING THE

EAST-INDIA COMPANY.

LONDON

Printed by J. Baskett, in Pall-mall.

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# LETTER

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

## LORD NORTH.

OCT 10 1940

MY LORD,

I Gave all the attention due to the importance of the subject, and to your Lordship's great abilities, when on the 5th of April you opened to the House of Commons a proposition, tending to permit the territorial acquisitions and revenues, lately obtained in India, to remain, under proper restrictions and regulations, in the

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possession of the Company, during a term not exceeding six years; the public to forego all participation in the produce thereof, until the Company shall have repaid such sums of money as shall be advanced by the public for the relief of the Company, and the bond-debt of the Company be reduced to 1,500,000 l. from thenceforth, during the remainder of the said term, three fourth parts of the surplus nett profits of the Company at home, above the sum of 8l. *per cent. per annum*, upon their capital stock, to be paid into the Exchequer, for the use of the public; and the remaining fourth part to be applied, either in further reducing the Company's bond-debt, or for composing a fund to be set apart for the use of the Company in the case of extraordinary emergencies.

Such is the substance, and nearly such were the words, of your Lordship's motion. The Company can be supported by no means short of those proposed by you for their present relief. The terms of participation

participation are certainly equal to what they can, in any degree of moderation, expect. Nay, I think, they exceed every reasonable expectation which the Company could form, and that the public have a just claim upon the whole of that fourth remaining part, which, in the question and the resolution upon it, is to be applied either in further reducing the Company's bond-debt, or to the use of the Company in extraordinary emergencies.

Although, upon a medium of many years back, the Company have divided 8l. *per cent.* and fallacious calculations have been produced to justify such excessive dividends; yet it is certain that these profits, fairly stated, did not entitle them to divide above six. An addition of 2l. *per cent.* principally arising out of the territorial revenue, now acknowledged to belong to the public, will surely be sufficient for the Company.

Were the surplus fourth to be appropriated to an increase of the Company's

capital in trade, as your Lordship, in your speech, wished it might, and you called upon the House for the opinion of other members upon that subject; such increase, while it augmented the revenue of the public, would accumulate profits, which, although they could not be applied to the immediate benefit of the Company in an increase of dividend, must become their property, whenever their agreement with the public should cease. In the possible supposition that the trade might not admit of an increased capital, provision should surely be made for lending that fourth part to the public, at a very moderate rate of interest, if any at all should be thought reasonable. But as your Lordship's invitation to the members, to declare their opinion upon the most proper purposes to which that surplus might be applied, was not accepted, the question passed in the original words of the motion; and I much fear, that *extraordinary emergencies* can never be interpreted to mean that increase



of capital, from which alone the public can derive any advantage. Such emergencies may much more probably hereafter arise from, and be construed to mean, the Company's bond-debts in the Indies, which, by accounts received from India since your Lordship's speech on the 5th of April, amount to 1,416,000 l. These have not been taken into your Lordship's contemplation, nor into any of the calculations formed upon the state of the Company. No provision has been made for their discharge; nay, their amount, until now, was not precisely known. No restrictions appear to be thought on, to prevent their increase; nor can it be said with certainty, that emergencies may not arise in India to render an increase of debt necessary. Yet the creditors of the Company there have, and will have, as good a claim as those in Europe, who have lent sums to the Company, which they had no right to borrow. Equity and compassion will be equally strong in both cases, and law but equally weak.

I have

I have dwelt thus long upon the impropriety of applying the surplus profits to the use of the Company, not so much from a belief that they will become an object much worthy of attention during the remainder of the Company's term, as from an apprehension that such a precedent may be prejudicial to the public in any future bargain with the present or any other Company.

I have no doubt of your Lordship's industry in enquiring into the nature of the evils to be remedied, and in devising the best means to eradicate them, and prevent their return.

But, forgive me for saying it, I as little doubt the impossibility, by any regulations which can be formed, of curing evils so interwoven with the original constitution of the Company, as, in the words of the Poet, to "grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength." In such cases, if you would eradicate the evils, you must destroy the patient. Their existence is coeval and inseparable.

Yours &c

The

The evils to be cured are, gambling in the alley, and frauds and malversations at home and abroad.

The causes are self-evident: an open and indiscriminate admission of all descriptions of men, and a right in such men, under certain real or fictitious qualifications, to choose their Directors, and after such choice to controll their councils and actions, during the short continuance to which their existence is limited. These causes were admitted into the original formation of the Company, and became a part of its essence: remove these, and you annihilate the Company. But while this Company remains, the evils arising from those causes must exist. They grew as the Company flourished; but, feeding upon its vitals in proportion as the nourishment increased, they consumed that supply by which both were supported: They now decline together; and will rise together, if the Company should ever revive. Palliatives may be used, temporary expedients

dients may be tried : such have been used and tried ; and every further endeavour will only serve to prove the inefficacy and futility of such attempts, while the cause remains rooted and untouched.

As the possessions of the Company were extended in India, the Direction increased in importance, and became after their acquisition of the territorial revenues one of the great objects of avarice, ambition, and party ; artifice, fraud, and corruption, means usual and natural to them, were employed to operate upon the body of electors, then composed of men most susceptible of their impressions: the sober, honest, and discreet Proprietors of the late lists retired from the Company, satisfied with a large and unexpected increase of fortune ; and were succeeded by adventurers and gamesters, a fluctuating set, who bought in or sold out as their ever-varying speculations directed them.

The body of Directors, whose annual election depended upon such constituents,  
were



were equally subject to vicissitude and change: in the numberless shiftings of Proprietors new men were to be gratified; and in every change of Directors the friends of those displaced were to be won over by new gratifications. In either event the interest of the publick was sacrificed, and the plunder of the Indies made the reward and wages of corrupt services, while the uncertainty of the tenure spread quicker and wider the scenes of cruelty and devastation.

It may not be improper here to insert Lord Clive's description of the General Courts and the Court of Directors, with which he closed his speech in the House of Commons on the 30th March 1772.

“ With regard to the General Courts I believe I need not dwell long on the consequence of them. Their violent proceedings have been subversive of the authority of the Court of Directors. The agents abroad have known this: They have therefore never scrupled to set the

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orders

orders of Directors at defiance, when it was their interest to disobey them; and they have escaped punishment, by means of the over-awing interest of individuals at General Courts. Thus have General Courts co-operated with the Court of Directors in the mischiefs that have arisen in Bengal; whilst annual contested elections have in a manner deprived the Directors of the power of establishing any authority over their servants. The first half of the year is employed in freeing themselves from the obligations contracted by their last election; and the second half is wasted in incurring new obligations, and securing their election for the next year, by daily sacrifices of some interest of the Company. The Direction, notwithstanding all these manœuvres, has been so fluctuating and unsettled, that new and contradictory orders have been frequently sent out; and the servants, who to say the truth have generally understood the interest of the Company much

much better than the Directors, have in many instances followed their own opinion, in opposition to theirs."

Yet great as the evils have been arising from an annual choice of Directors, a prolongation of their term would be a hazardous expedient, until a better mode of choosing shall ensure a better choice.

The surprising turn of events, by which the Company was snatched from the brink of destruction and raised to the throne of Aurungzebe in the most flourishing part of his dominions, is too well known to require a repetition here, even were it necessary to my present purpose. The causes which have since produced another reverse, equally astonishing, are various and numberless. Many of them are still hidden in the obscurity natural and necessary to guilt; but the fatal effects are notorious: The Company is bankrupt, and India is ruined. Nations rise to prosperity and affluence by slow degrees; but their fall may be sudden and precipitate. The late  
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flourishing state of India was the work of ages: the desolation now spread over it, is, as we have seen, the operation of a very few years; while Britain, far from being enriched, is impoverished by its spoils.

The scenes of villainy and horror, described in Fielding's *Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, have been realized and heightened there; so far will avarice and rapacity surpass all the creative powers of invention, in the pursuit of their objects. The miscreant actors who started up into Nabobs in India, are since become Lords of no inconsiderable possessions in Great Britain; and some are become legislators here, who, by all laws human and divine, would for far less crimes committed in any civilized country, be punished there with imprisonment, confiscation, and death.

But India became lawless from the moment she passed under our government; the sceptre, wrested from the gentle grasp  
of



of Asiatic despotism, was thrown aside, and rods of iron put into the hands of British barbarians: No rule for direction, no sanction for punishment, no interest in the rulers for the protection and perservation of the governed, prevailed there. The harvest was abundant, but the season short and precarious: not a moment was lost in gathering, not an art was omitted that could expedite the hoarding. Pride and emulation stimulated avarice; and the sole contest was, who should return to that home, which they almost all quitted beggars, with the greatest heap of crimes and of plunder.

The first labourers tired and satiated left the gleanings to others, who are since successively returned with smaller, but not inconsiderable, bundles; and the only men left destitute are the unhappy natives, to whom the whole of right belonged.

Wealth operates on a nation as food on the animal body: to give strength and health, it must gradually diffuse itself, properly

perly prepared and digested, over all the parts through an infinite variety of channels. Too great a quantity thrown in at once over-charges the system, stops the passages, and interrupts circulation; producing disease, langour, and death.

Wealth acquired by manufacture and commerce, the earnings of all ranks of men from the labourer up to the merchant-exporter, will enrich all with proportional shares of profit and reward; while a sudden influx, poured in by rapine and fraud, choaks the channels of industry, deluging and impoverishing the face of that country which they were wont to fertilize. Such was the fate of Rome when Carthage was plundered; and such have been the consequences derived to Great Britain, from East-India devastation.

Although the heavy distresses under which we continue to labour, have had their commencement with the frauds and misconduct of the Company, and the enormities

mities committed by their servants; although the losses and ruin of thousands in these kingdoms proceed evidently and immediately from that polluted source; yet there have been other concurrent causes, and it would not be fair to lay the whole of our calamitous situation to the charge of one of those causes only, although it may have mixed with and aggravated our misfortunes in every other instance.

The same inclement winds blowing from the east would have blasted our harvests, and stunted our cattle, although they had not waisted those swarms of locusts to us. But increased consumption produces greater scarcity; and gold lavished in seducing the laborious to idleness, and spreading the contagion of vicious example, increases price, while it discourages industry.

If the company could be saved for the benefit of the public, they cannot be in better hands than your Lordship's. *Si Pergama dextra defendi possent, etiam hac de-*  
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*fensa*

*senſa fuiſſent.* And this will be the only comfort of much toil and diſappointed labour, which will remain with your Lordſhip, in your attempts to reſcue from deſerved ruin a race of ignorant and wicked barbarians, offensive to heaven and earth.

I do not mean to include under this deſcription of the aggregate body every individual of which it is compoſed, among whom there are, no doubt, many, who, free from the crimes of their aſſociates, are not diſgraced by being members of ſuch a community. Some there certainly are, who, while they have acquired wealth by honeſt means, have with a Gregory and a Haſtings gained no leſs honour by an avowed diſapprobation of thoſe who have enriched themſelves by fraud and rapine.

The formation of the Eaſt India Company, ill adapted even to the narrow object of their firſt inſtitution, became abſolutely incompatible with the elevated ſituation to which they have been ſince raiſed.

If it was ill-judged to truſt the choice of Directors, who had only a few ſmall factories



ries to govern in India, and a trade not very considerable to direct, to a company composed of all sorts of men, the impropriety of such a mode of election became greater as the trust grew more important, the electors less fit to be confided in, and the temptations to a wrong choice incomparably stronger. The trade to the East Indies, even as it stood in the reign of Elizabeth, when we had no possessions there, when our capital did not exceed 26,000*l.* nor our shipping one thousand four hundred and thirty tons, should not have been trusted to Directors chosen by such men as stand qualified to vote upon the present list of Proprietors. But that such men should choose not only the Directors of the most extensive and important trade known to the mercantile world, but that the same vote should raise them to arbitrary dominion over an empire, containing from fifteen to seventeen millions of inhabitants, and that every year the same mode of election should be repeated, is an

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abfurdity not to be paralleled in any time, or in any country.

It is true, that all are admitted to purchafe ftock in the Dutch East-India Company; and although the whole of their capital be but about 600,000 l. upon which the dividend is, at a medium, about 15 *per cent.* nearly five of which is paid in the firft place to the States; and although none of thofe furprifing revolutions have happened in their East-India poffeffions, which have opened that wide field of fpeculation that has drawn adventurers from all parts of Europe into our company; yet gamblers in Dutch East-India ftock are not unknown in the United Provinces. The numbers indeed are few, and the evils confined within a narrow compafs. But were the holders of Dutch ftock, under certain money'd qualifications, entrusted with an annual choice of their Directors, who, like ours, are fovereigns in India, and with a conftant control over them; inconfiderable as the fums are, to which their ftock and dividend

pend amount, the offices to be disposed of in Batavia, and the other extensive Dutch settlements in India, under the influence of such constituents over the creatures of their choice, would deluge the Dutch possessions with the same enormities that have destroyed Bengal, and would spread over the United Provinces the same misfortunes which have lately overtaken some of their inhabitants, less cautious adventurers in our East-India stock than their wary countrymen have been, and are wont to be.

Whoever peruses the list of our Proprietors will see by the quantity of stock possessed by each, calculated as qualifications to choose and for being chosen Directors, that elections are the object to which the general attention was entirely directed. Their hopes and expectations arose from an unjust and partial administration, favourable to them and their friends; not from a wise and honest conduct, equally beneficial to all: they trusted to speculation, and not to fair profit;

while Nabobs, placing the immense bulk of their fortune in other securities, beyond the reach of that tottering edifice whose foundations they had sapped, left just enough behind to entitle them to share in the property and disposal of the materials of the ruin.

The Proprietors of stock, in Holland, have not the choice of their Directors, nor have any but the Directors a decisive voice in the management of affairs. Upon the death of a Director, for the Directors are continued for life, those of the Chamber where the vacancy happens, and who mean to be present at the election, summon an equal number of Proprietors, possessed of about 550*l.* stock, to attend, and to concur with them in the nomination of three persons of the Company, out of whom a successor to the deceased is chosen by the Sovereign, who has also a voice, by his representative, in each of the six Chambers. Seven Proprietors are admitted into the assembly of 17 Directors,



tors, deputed by all the Chambers, to meet twice a year; those Proprietors may make any propositions they think proper, and deliver their opinions upon any subject proposed; but they have no vote in the decision of any controverted questions. Here end the functions of the meer Dutch stock-holder, with respect to the general concerns of the Company; and, thus restrained from any influence over the Directors, and from any management of the Company's affairs, it is of little importance, with respect to these objects, who they are who compose the body of Proprietors in Holland. But it is far otherwise in our Company; and I will venture to assert, that, while elections remain in the body of Proprietors, whatever the money'd qualifications may be made, no regulations or restrictions that can be devised will prove sufficient.

Those restrictions and regulations must either originate in Parliament, or in the Company. But, wherever they take their

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rise,

rise, they should be confirmed, and their duration secured, by Parliamentary authority; and this should be done in the very first instance, as proper regulations and restrictions are, in the question of the 5th of April, made the condition under which the possession of the territorial revenues is to remain with the Company during a term not exceeding six years.

If the condition be not accomplished, and the regulations and restrictions expressly and compleatly settled at the time that the grant to the Company is made, it must remain resumable upon non-performance; and should the whole or any considerable part be suffered to rest upon the precarious ground of the Company's by-laws, uncertainty and insecurity will be the natural consequences, in both cases; and these, in their turn, will produce the same spirit of gambling and adventure which has already proved so very fatal.

Yet, my Lord, it will be impossible in this session of parliament to perfect that  
great

great work of legislation. The Company never can do it: they are equally unfit to enact or to execute. Those among them, who know most, are the least fit to be advised with: they are the authors of those very mischiefs you would redress. Yet, in the printed speech of their noble apologist, page 42 to 46, "The Company's servants have not been the authors of those acts of violence and oppression of which it is the fashion to accuse them. Such crimes were committed by the natives of the country acting as their agents, and for the most part without their knowledge," until "they were dragged into the kennel by those agents and Banyans:" then indeed they began to know something of the matter, for, "then the acts of violence begin." The Banyan, charming as a fair lady to the Company's servants, lays his bags of silver before him to-day, gold to-morrow, jewels the next day; and if these fail, he then tempts him in the way of his profession, which

is trade. The Company's servant has no resource, for he cannot fly. In short, flesh and blood cannot bear it. Thus are poor English youths of sixteen sent out by the Company to be writers, not worth a groat, corrupted in their principles at their very first setting out, left at the mercy of Banyans and in a state of dependence under them, who commit such acts of violence and oppression as their interest prompts them to, under the pretended sanction and authority of the Company's servant." Good God! what must those Directors be, who send out such boys in stations which command such influence! And what must those intrusted with power in India be, who permit its exercise! But wonder will cease, when we consider, that Directors must bind their constituents to them by obligations, stronger in proportion to the unfitness of the person recommended and preferred; and that the servants of the Company in high stations rose by the same steps, and learned in the same



same schools those admirable maxims of government, which they ever after practised. Hence, exclaims our author, “arises the clamour against the English Gentlemen in India.” Poor Gentlemen! while our hearts bleed for the oppression and dependance under which they groaned in India, dragged through kennels, heavily loaded with silver, gold, jewels, and precious merchandise by cruel Banyans; we are at length relieved in page 46, by the pleasing picture of those *English Gentlemen*, released from their captivity, “in a retired situation when returned to England, where they are no longer Nabobs and Sovereigns of the East; nothing tyrannical in their dispositions towards their inferiors:” possibly the tables kept for their upper servants, may have been open to the late proprietors of the houses which they inhabit. “Good and humane masters to their servants;” some of whom they formerly served in the lowest stations. “Charitable, benevolent, gener-

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ous and hospitable," to every poor borough that would shake off the yoke of natural interest. "Not one character sufficiently flagitious for Mr. Foote to exhibit on the Theatre in the Hay-market." Here his Lordship mistakes the nature of those characters which are fit for farcical representations.

Nabobs black with crimes of the deepest dye, are not objects to excite laughter: the magnitude of both demands a more solemn audience, and points them out as proper persons in a more serious drama. Possibly their wives, dressed out in diamonds and oriental pearls, might not improperly blaze in the character of the Queen of Shebah, and, with an awkward display of wealth in clumsy magnificence and misplaced ornaments, become only the objects of mirth and ridicule; could the spectator forget that the destruction of India and infamy of Great Britain were the price at which all this costly finery was purchased.

Previous to Lord Clive's vindication of the much injured and misrepresented servants of the Company in India, he gives a description of the inhabitants of Indostan, whom he represents, "especially those of Bengal, as servile, mean, submissive, and humble, in inferior stations; and in superior, luxurious, effeminate, tyrannical, treacherous, venal, cruel." Whether the contrast be so great as he would have us believe, between the servants of the Company and the Indians in superior stations, and whether those *English Gentlemen* had not adopted and improved upon the last set of Eastern qualities, will best appear in the reports of the Select and Secret Committees. But the instruction to be collected from the assertions and characters contained in the speech of the Peer and Hero of Plassey is plainly this: the enormities committed in India are all to be laid to the account of the native Indians, Guard against them by restrictions and regulations! free the servants of the Com-

pany from their tyrannic influence from which *they cannot now fly!* and all may be safely trusted to those humane *English Gentlemen*, “ who were the Cabinet-Council that planned every thing, and with the Officers of the navy and army, who have had *great share* in the execution, justly claim, not only a part, but the whole merit of our great acquisitions. p. 46. It is true, indeed, that the *whole* of the inland trade, upon which depends in some degree the receipt of the revenues, and almost totally the happiness and prosperity of the people, has been taken into the hands of those meritorious servants of the Company, and of their agents, which they have carried on in a capacity before unknown; for they have traded, not only as merchants, but as sovereigns; and, by grasping at the whole of the inland trade, have taken the bread out of the mouths of thousands and thousands of merchants, who used formerly to carry on that trade, and who are now reduced to beggary. To this cause  
the



the distress in Bengal, as far as it relates to the inland trade, is owing." p. 48, 49. And one instance of that distress, has been the famine of 1770, in which many thousands fell a sacrifice to the avarice and tyranny of those most *merciful* monopolists. But we are told, in p. 43, that "The Company's servants have not been the authors of those acts of violence and oppression, of which it is the fashion to accuse them; and that such crimes are committed by the natives of the country, acting as their agents, and for the most part without their knowledge."

However cruel those agents may have been to their unhappy countrymen, their tenderness and honesty towards their masters are exemplary and unexampled, enriching them with the spoil, while they saved them from any participation of the guilt by which it was acquired, and from the horrors with which their *charitable, benevolent, generous, and hospitable* souls, would

would be affected by the knowledge of such abominations.

The lesson thus taught by that noble Lord's speech, is no bad specimen of the advice likely to be given to your Lordship by any of the inferior Nabobs, should any be taken into your councils, for the formation of laws properly adapted to the present state of India.

Adequate remedies and preventives cannot now be hoped for. A few out-lines are all that the wit of man can produce from the materials with which your Lordship is furnished. The rest must be left, at least for the present, to the wisdom and integrity of those who shall be entrusted with the administration of government in India. Speculative systems of legislation are hazardous; but those transplanted from one country to another, dissimilar in almost every circumstance, will certainly fail. A perfect plan to be formed at once, is of all imaginary entities the most vain and chimerical.

The edifice must rise by slow degrees, through many alterations, suggested by trial, and approved by experience. So rose our Gothick structure, superior in use, strength, and duration, to the splendid productions of Greece and Rome. But such a structure can never be fitted to an Asiatick climate.

A barbarous people require fewer laws, than nations excelling in the refinements of arts, taste, and luxury. Fewer means are necessary to direct ignorance, than to restrain contrivance and invention from deviating into forbidden ways. The ideas of barbarism, and the objects of its passions, are not many. But its habits, inclinations, and prejudices, are stronger in proportion as they are less dissipated and are confined to a narrower channel. To combat these by compulsory laws, is a hard and ungrateful task. To form and mold the mind to compliance, would be more easy and successful. This alone can be effected

effected by the influence of precept, example, and kind treatment. When these have had their effect, laws should be adapted to the impressions they have made, and to the genius and propensities which they have created. Let the barbarian believe you love him, and mean him good; he will confide in, and be directed by you. Personal authority, arising from love and reverence, must precede laws, where tyranny is not meant to be established; and is it possible to suppose, that such authority can ever exist in India, in the servants of the Company? That very title must, for ages, render them odious; and the appellation should be changed, although the men were to be continued.

Russia is perhaps the strongest instance to be found in History, of Barbarism humanised, and national ignorance enlightened. By the unexampled wisdom, perseverance, and patriotism of one great man, followed by immediate successors adopting his system, some progress has been made



made towards civilizing that country; and a small district surrounding the seat of the most extensive European Empire, is now emerging from darkness. The capital has an academy, founded by the late Empress, where science begins to dawn; and the present Sovereign has published an essay towards a code of laws. But the Russians are still slaves.

Natural as liberty is to man, society seems still more natural: all are certainly made to associate; but it is not so clear that all are made to enjoy liberty, while two thirds of the human species, women and children, are formed subject to the will of others.

Where-ever the human footstep is found, civil societies are established; and in every such society natural freedom is restrained either by a voluntary surrender, or by the exercise of force or cunning, qualities natural to some, as imbecillity, and pusillanimity, producing subjection, are to others:

In those it is natural to rise, in these to sink. All effects are from the operation of natural causes, various and differing as the causes which produce them differ and prevail. Tawny complexions are as natural in Asia, as fair are in Europe. They are not to be altered; because the cause is permanent, and whatever proceeds from that influencing principle, whether in bodily form or the affections of the mind, is equally unalterable. If the climate which tinges the Asiatick skin unnerves the hand and heart, you may wash the Asiaticks white as easily as make them free.

Would to God! that the causes which produce and preserve liberty were equally permanent and prevalent; and that other causes equally natural, but hostile to freedom, did not ofteneft prevail even in those soils and climates, where its growth seems most natural. There are, and have been, slaves in all latitudes of the known world.

Greece

Greece and Rome were free; Great Britain still remains a third instance, and history produces but three, of an empire composed of many provinces connected by laws, and not pressed together by the grasp of arbitrary power. In Asia, there is not a single trace of the smallest community where liberty ever prevailed. The very desire of being free, if it ever could be supposed to exist, is extinct there; and the utmost happiness which the multitude are capable of receiving is from despotism wisely and humanely exercised. They have been sometimes blessed with good masters. Let it be the care of Great Britain, that the people under her dominion shall ever have such. Should the authors of ruin, continued as the instruments of salvation, shift their nature and habitudes, the prodigy will be as great as an empire in India, governed by the same laws, and enjoying the same liberty, with Great Britain.

I do not mean to argue that there should be no laws for direction and punishment: such are to be found in the most arbitrary governments, and none can subsist without them. The dominion exercised by the Company in India, did it deserve the name of government, would be an exception. The legislature of Great Britain will, no doubt, in time, compose a better code than could be produced by Eastern tyranny; but in the best that human wisdom can devise for Asia, more will depend upon execution than legislation: great discretionary powers must be allowed; and in the dilemma, if such existed, of being obliged to trust solely to either, good men would be preferable to the best laws. The Company have produced few such men; and by trying what they may hereafter do, an experiment which cannot succeed, you will retard, and possibly render impracticable, every future remedy.

If the writer of this letter finds that a continuance of his correspondence with  
your



your Lordship may be likely to produce any benefit to the public, he will venture to lay before you and them, at least, some general notions of what in his opinion would be preferable to the experiment which you mean to try. If it should appear so in the eyes of the public, your Lordship, from a laudable deference to them, may adopt what you would not be otherwise induced to propose. This consideration, and this alone, has determined me to publish what at first was intended for your private perusal, by

MY LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most humble and

Obedient Servant,

April 24th,  
1773.

A. B.

your Lordship may be likely to produce  
any benefit to the public, he will venture  
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My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and

Obedient Servant,

A. B.

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